



DESIGNSHIP GUIDE

FOR MORE
INSPIRING
COMMUNICATAION

INTRO

We believe that every graphic design product has to be unique and designed to address specific needs in a thorough working process.

That's why we've created The Designship Guide - a toolkit for graphic designers and everyone who needs graphic design services and wants to know more about the creative processes behind them.

It presents a time-tested graphic design working process that we use in our everyday work. It is a compilation of different theories created by design theorists and professionals through the years. For some of the steps we've designed detailed canvases, which could help you to organize better your creative process.

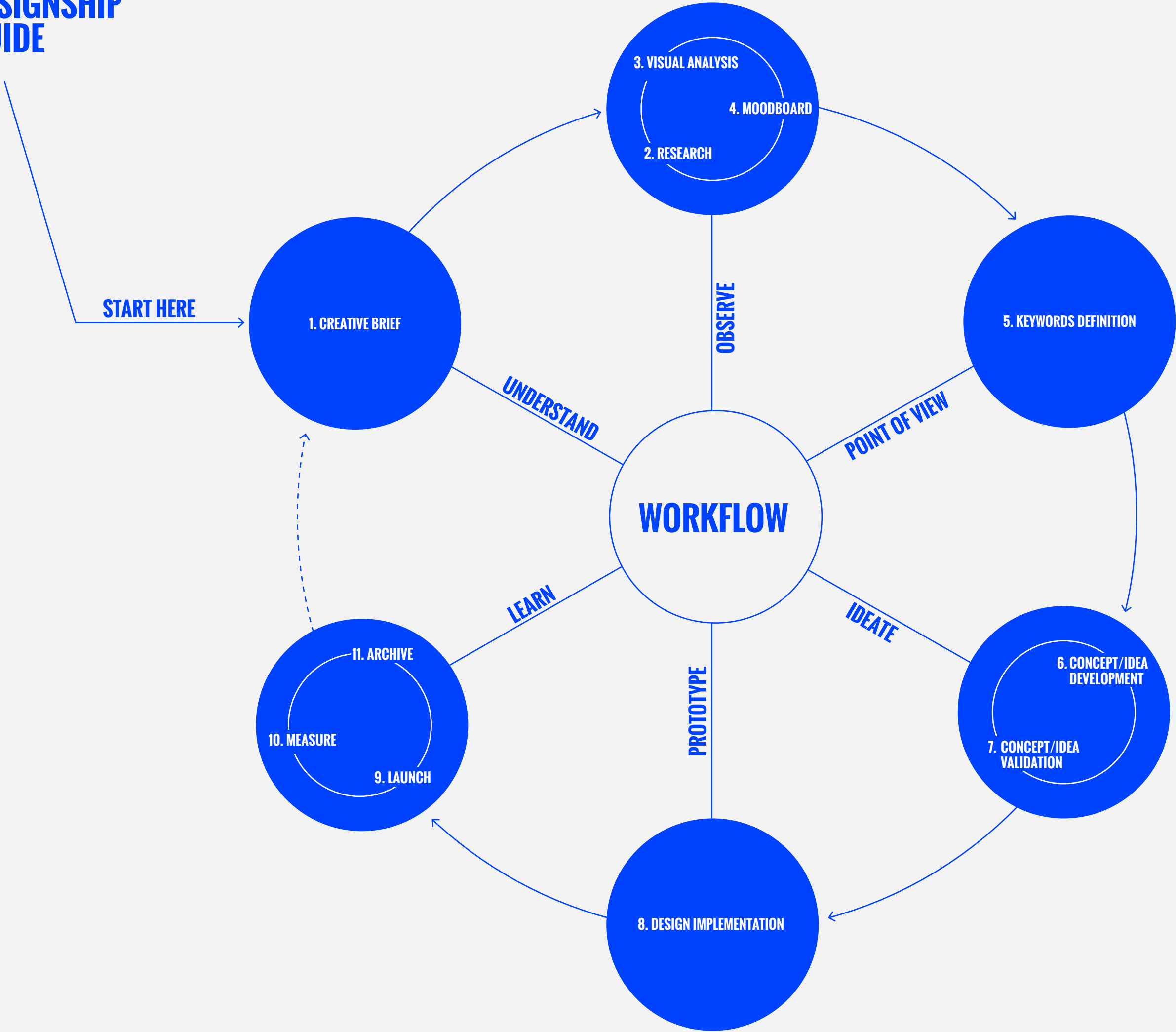
CONTENT

In this Guide you will find The Main Workflow, The Creative Brief Canvas, and The Keywords Definition Canvas, made in print friendly versions.

You could use The Main Workflow to structure all stages of your design project.

We consider the second one - The Creative Brief Canvas, as the most important one for the foundation of one design project. Whether you follow the whole suggested working process, or not, you always have to start with the brief.

The last canvas is also very important and it will help you to define the main keywords, which will inspire your creative idea and concept and will help you for their implementation.



DESIGNSHIP GUIDE

FRAMEWORK

INTRO

1. CREATIVE BRIEF

The making of a Brief is the most important step of the beginning of your new design project. The more information you gather in advance about the client and the final visual communication goals, the more easy you will find the right design solution.

In this process, the time spend together in communication with the client is crucial for the effectiveness of the end results and helps both sides to avoid any misunderstandings and disappointments that could appear later on in the next steps.

2. RESEARCH

In this step together with the client you have to make a research on his competition and to gather information for all design communication materials that they use. Don't narrow your search only on a local level. Concentrate both on the good and the bad examples.

You could also collect current inspirational visual trends, which you find appropriate for the final goals. Search in creative blogs, Pinterest, books, image galleries, websites, and magazines.

3. VISUAL ANALYSIS

During this step you have to make a visual analysis of all selected materials during the Research phase. It's really important to define what are the main visual characteristics used by the client's competitors: colors, forms, fonts, messages, photos, etc. Do the same for the found trends.

This analysis will help you to structure the collected information and to use it as a foundation of your Moodboard.

4. MOODBOARD

Put all collected information from the Visual analysis step in one place (spread sheet, document, presentation, etc.) and together with the client figure out what will be the visual strategy of the design project in order to be unique and sustainable. Through some iterations you could reorder all elements and will be able to look at them from different angles. That's how you will find the direction that will lead you in the next steps. The Moodboard could have pictures, texts, graphics, colors, fonts, textures, materials, etc.

5. KEYWORDS DEFINITION

During this phase you have to define the basic pillars around which you will develop the future creative concepts and ideas. The main goal of this step in the creative process is to brainstorm and came up with at least 9 key words around 3 basic characteristics of the product/service: its Function, its Emotional value, and the Dream client it is designed for.

This step also requires the involvement of the client.

6. CONCEPT/IDEA DEVELOPMENT

Now you have all needed information to start to work independently on the creative concepts/ ideas of the design project. In the defined in the Brief deadline, you will have to show them as a presentation and could argument your decisions with the defined Keywords.

The proposal could be presented in the form of a sketch, collage, video, etc. The most important is to be convincing in its creativity and functionality.

7. CONCEPT/IDEA VALIDATION

The responsibility for the final choice is often seen as a single decision of the client. It is better if he/she could involve other members of the team or other decision makers in this process, but must keep in mind that the decision must be made from the perspective of the defined target group(s).

The client could test the chosen idea with representatives of the target groups, but it's not recommended to test more than one idea without the permission of the designer.

On the bases of the feedback, the client and the designer make some analyses and the designer refine the idea for the next step of the Implementation of the chosen design concept.

8. DESIGN IMPEMENTATION

On the basis of the set keywords and the chosen creative idea, you will have to define in details all visual characteristics of the communication elements: fonts, colors, forms, photos, rhythm, etc.

The client provides all needed information for the design process, like final texts, photos, statistics, etc.

In this phase the communication between both sides is regular. The designer implement all needed communicational materials and provide all final results of the design project.

9. LAUNCH

In this step together with the client you will have to create a strategy for the promotion of the new visual communication products, based on the specifics of your creative concept.

The goal is to find the proper channels in order to reach the maximum number of representatives of the target groups.

10. MEASURE

The impact of every design product could be measured in different ways - with the received feedback with the time, with the increase of the profitability of the company, with the increased trust in the brand, etc. It's best if the client could define the metrics he will use in the Brief in the beginning of the project, so both sides have clear idea of what kind of return on investment the client expect, and over what time period.

The measurement could be used not only for further development of the design product, but also as a way to proof some daring or risky creative design solutions you've proposed.

11. ARCHIVING

In this phase you will have to create an archive of the project with guidelines for further use of the design products. You have to define the main elements: fonts, colors, photos, etc.

Ask the client which samples you could use as part of your portfolio.

COMPANY / ORGANIZATION

Description

specify the industry sector, the prize segment of the products/services, how many employers the company/ organization has, and similar information

Mission/Vision

what is the main mission of the company/ organization

Code of conduct

what are the 5 main values of the company/ organization

Prediction for evolution/scalability

the potential of the business/initiative for growth

Brand history

list all available design products, like logo, slogan, website (address), specific requirements (for example - use only recycle materials)

PRODUCT / SERVICE/ INITIATIVE

Value proposition/ Uniqueness

what is the unique value of the product/ service/ initiative

Goals / Objectives

what are the main goals

Indicators of Success

how you intent to measure the results of this design service: impact of the sales; profitability; interviews: comments, etc.

Target groups

who are the target groups of the product/ service

TO DO

List of the communication elements

write down all expected final products: logo, business card, visual identity, web site, print materials, catalogue, etc.

Channels for distribution

BRIEF SUMMARY

Short description of the task

RELATIONSHIPS

Other subcontractors related with the project

list all subcontractors, like print houses, developer, illustrator, photographer, architect, etc. (divide the list in two: the ones, suggested by the client and the ones, suggested, or find by the designer)

Desission makers and contact persons

list the names and the contacts of the people, with whom you will communicate about the project and about the final decisions

Budget

divide the budget on two: the payment for the design service, and the production costs

Timeline

make a schedule of the project with all important deadlines

DESIGNSHIP GUIDE

WHY

The Creative Brief Canvas provides the right questions you need to ask in order to start gathering all needed information as a foundation of your new design project.

You can start from any column, or box you like, but it’s best from left to right. They are not mandatory, but the more information you fill in, the more clear idea you will have about every aspect of the task.

This first step of the design process requires the involvement of both client of the design services and the designer - through personal meetings, emails, phone calls, etc. In this process, the time spend together in communication is crucial for the effectiveness of the end results and helps both sides to avoid any misunderstandings and disappointments that could appear later on in the next steps.

You can always go back and edit the information you’ve already put in until you came up with the best picture of the desirable outcomes.

The final filled Creative Brief Canvas represents the mutual agreement on every little details about the design project and helps for the identification of the right design solutions during the next creative process.

CREATIVE BRIEF CANVAS

COMPANY/ORGANIZATION COLUMN

Description of the company/organization: specify the industry sector, the prize segment of the products/services, how many employers the company has, and any useful information;

Mission/ Vision of the company/organization - what is the main mission it is trying to achieve;

Code of Conduct - what are the (at least) 5 main values of the company/organization;

Prediction for evolution/ scalability - can you describe the product/ service/ business of the company as scalable?

Brand history - list all of the design products the company already has, like logo, slogan, website, specific requirements (for example, to work only with recycled materials).

HOW TO MAKE

PRODUCT/SERVICE COLUMN

In this column you must specify the information about the product/services.

Value proposition - what is the unique value of the product/service

Goals/ Objectives - what are the main goals

Success indicator measurement - how the client intent to measure the results of the design project

Target groups - who are the target groups of the product/ service

TO DO COLUMN

List of the design communication elements:

make a list of all design products that have to be produced: logo, business card, visual identity, web site, print materials, catalogue, etc.

Channels for distribution

In this box list all distribution channels that will be used: online channels, outdoors advertising, print media, etc.

BRIEF SUMMARY COLUMN

Short description of the task:

make a short description of the design project - what has to be done, for whom, whit what purpose

RELATIONSHIPS COLUMN

Other subcontractors related to the project:

list all subcontractors, like print houses, developer, illustrator, photographer, architect, etc.

Divide the list in two:

the ones, suggested by your client and the ones, suggested, or find by you.

Decision makers and contact persons:

list the names and the contacts of the people, with whom you will communicate about the project and about the final decisions.

Budget of the project:

divide the budget on two: the payment for the design service you provide, and the production costs

Timeline:

make a schedule of the project with the main deadlines

CREATIVE BRIEF CANVAS

Value proposition/
Goals, Objectives/
Brand history/
Prediction for evolution & scalability



Description of the company/
Mission/
Vision/
Code of conduct



Target groups



KEYWORDS

3 Keywords
About the function of the product/service

What your end user/ customer will value most of the functions of your product/service (it's performance; innovation; price; usability, etc.)?

1

2

3

3 Keywords
About the emotional value of the product/service

Which of the company' s values and visions could be conveyed with the product/service?
What specific emotions the product/service wants to provoke in the end users?
Is it funny, or serious? Is it conservative, or pro-active?

1

2

3

3 Keywords
About the dream client

What is the dream client's age, what is his behavior, what is his attitude, what is his status, what he like for breakfast, etc.?

1

2

3

DESIGNSHIP GUIDE

KEYWORDS CANVAS

HOW TO MAKE

WHY

The Keywords canvas will help you to define the basic pillars around which the future creative concept and idea proposal will be build. The main goal of this step in the creative process is to brainstorm and came up with at least 9 key words around 3 basic characteristics of the product/service: its Function, its Emotional value, and the Dream client it is designed for. They should be adjectives.

Start to fill in the Canvas from the left columns by using some of the information you’ve already filled in the Creative Brief Canvas.

KEYWORDS COLUMN

LEFT BOX ON THE FIRST ROW

In the left box on the first row fill in short description of the Value proposition, the Goals/ Objectives of the project; the Brand history, and the prediction of the scalability of the business. This will help you to define 3 key words about the product/ service from the perspective of its Function.

Ask the questions:
What your end user/ customer will value most of the functions of your product/service (performance; newness; price; usability, etc.)?

LEFT BOX ON THE SECOND ROW

In the left box on the second row copy from the Brief canvas the Description of the company/Mission/Vision/Code of conduct. This information will help you to define three key words about what kind of emotions you want to provoke with the product/ service.

Ask the questions:
Which of the company’ values and visions you could convey through the design of the product/ service?

What specific emotions the product/ service wants to provoke in the end users?

Is it funny, or serious? Is it conservative, or pro-active?

LEFT BOX ON THE THIRD ROW

In the left box on the third row copy from the Brief Canvas the description of the Target groups. After that try to find 3 key words that describes the dream client of the product/ service. Try to walk in the end user’s shoes.

Ask the questions:
What is the dream client age, what is his behavior, what is his attitude, what is his status, what he like for breakfast, etc.?